

**EXTERNAL REVIEW
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
POLICE DEPARTMENT
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
REPORT**

April 30, 2019

Change Integration Consulting, LLC

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I. Introduction

On September 13, 2018, a group of University of Washington (UW or the University) Police Department (UWPD or the Department) Sergeants and a Lieutenant submitted a letter to the UW Board of Regents outlining their concerns about UWPD leadership.¹ To address the issues raised, University President Ana Mari Cauce and Denzil Suite, Vice President for Student Life, determined that an independent third party should conduct an assessment of the Department, reviewing the following five areas:

- Efficacy of leadership
- Organizational structure
- Resource allocation
- Employee recruitment, selection, and retention processes
- Overall culture

The University retained a review team (the team) with deep and broad experience in law; police management, systems, policy, training, operations, labor relations, and community relations; state and local government management; public sector system reform; and organizational assessment and change, leadership, and executive coaching, to conduct the review.²

To better understand UWPD policies, processes, and structure, and to assess the organizational health of UWPD, the review team gathered information through review of documents, interviews conducted with 68 current and former employees of all ranks, as well as external stakeholders, and a department-wide culture and leadership survey, to which 90% of UWPD employees responded. By identifying major themes across multiple data sources, the team sought to discern ways the Department is functioning well and where there appear to be performance challenges.

The documents reviewed by the team included the letter of concerns submitted to the Board of Regents; Chief Vinson's memorandum in response; sample Internal Affairs investigations memoranda, training records, budget records; UWPD's website; two UWPD strategic plans; UWPD organizational studies and employee surveys conducted in 2001, 2003, and 2007; union grievances and complaints involving UWPD reviewed by the Public Employment Relations Commission;

¹ Six current Patrol Sergeants, one former Patrol Sergeant, and one Lieutenant signed the letter, all members of the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) Bargaining Unit.

² The review team consisted of: Kathryn Olson and Jeff Petee (Change Integration Consulting, LLC), Judge Anne Levinson (ret.), and Chief Deputy Jim Pugel (ret.).

commissioned and non-commissioned job postings; materials from Chief Vinson's background prior to his tenure as UWPD Chief; UWPD's most recent CALEA assessment; human resources information; and other written materials, some of which are specifically referred to below.

To the extent allowed, interviews were conducted confidentially, to encourage interviewees to be candid and allay fears of some that participation could result in repercussions. The team reached out broadly to encourage employees of all ranks to be interviewed, and to ask them to let others know they could contact the team directly to schedule an interview. As noted above, this led to the team interviewing 68 individuals, many more than originally anticipated. Meeting with nearly every person who sought an interview or was suggested as someone with relevant information allowed the team to be inclusive and thorough in its review. In order to maintain confidentiality, the team does not detail all of the specific incidents and comments supporting the findings in this report, but instead highlights the consistent themes that emerged. The team used all of the detail provided to it to identify consistent experiences and perspectives prior to reaching any conclusions about the issues under review, and in addition to preparing this written report shared additional personnel-related information verbally with UW administrators.

Those interviewed included current and former employees at all levels of UWPD – executive leadership, senior management, commissioned and civilian supervisory staff, officers, detectives, analysts, communications, dispatch, support staff, security guards, and others. Community stakeholder interviews were held with administrators who had the most contact with UWPD, student leaders, and regional law enforcement partners. Interviews typically lasted about one hour, were held in person and by phone, and included a few small group meetings.

The culture and leadership practices survey included 64 questions to help measure employees' personal engagement with their jobs, work climate, executive leadership and supervisory practices, communication in the Department, selection and retention processes, and training. The survey also requested that respondents identify which of 8 categories best fit the job role the respondent fills at UWPD.³ Space was provided for anyone who wanted to offer additional comments, whether or not the person had been interviewed. The department-wide survey was sent to 81 fulltime UWPD commissioned and non-commissioned employees. Approximately half (40) of the respondents added a comment, ranging from a single sentence to lengthy statements related to issues raised in the survey. The 90% response rate, very high for surveys of this kind, provided significant quantitative data to verify and help put into context the qualitative input from the interviews about UWPD culture and leadership strengths and challenges.

³ The job categories listed in the survey were: Executive Leadership; Senior Management; Sergeants or Civilian Supervisor/Lead; Officer – Patrol; Officer – Investigations, Training, Outreach, Other; Communications/Dispatcher; Security Guard; Analyst or Specialist; or Other.

The team was impressed with the interest, openness, and commitment of time by so many to the UWPD review process. The willingness of a broad cross-section of individuals to share personal experiences and observations provided invaluable assistance in conducting the review.

After the team completed its review, its findings and recommendations were shared with UW administrators. When the decision was made that John Vinson would be resigning his position as UWPD Chief, UW President Cauce and Vice President Suite then asked that the review team also recommend what the University should consider in its search for a new leader at UWPD and highlight any areas to which the incoming Chief should be attentive. The team added those recommendations, and finalized and transmitted this report to UW on April 30, 2019.

II. The Work of UWPD

Campus police departments have responsibilities and challenges similar to those of law enforcement at the local, state, and federal levels. Whatever their jurisdiction, police chiefs “must successfully meet the demands of community members, politicians, organizational members, unions, police associations, special interest groups, and their own executive staff members.”⁴

But university policing is also unique in a number of ways, such as its role in supporting other aspects of student life, management of large and sometimes controversial events on campus, and compliance with the Clery Act.⁵ Campus police also must address parental fears and concerns for their children attending college, a challenge not typical for other law enforcement agencies. In addition, in a college environment, the community of students changes almost entirely every four years, creating both opportunities and demands for campus police. In meeting their law enforcement responsibilities, campus police executives work on sometimes complex matters relating to fiscal, legal, and technological issues; diverse communities and staff; organizational structure and operation; and, human resources considerations.⁶

As noted on its website, “The UWPD has the exclusive responsibility to act upon law-enforcement matters and perform police functions for the Seattle campus of the University of Washington. Officers investigate all crimes and enforce federal, state and local laws as well as Washington Administrative Code (WAC) rules within the University of Washington’s jurisdiction.”⁷ UWPD serves students, staff, faculty and

⁴ Rainguet, Fred W. and Dodge, Mary. *The Problems of Police Chiefs: An Examination of the Issues in Tenure and Turnover*, *Police Quarterly* (September 2001), Vol. 4 No. 3, 268-288.

⁵ The Clery Act is a federal law requiring that colleges and universities participating in federal financial aid programs maintain and report campus crime statistics and security information. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/school/clery-act-reports>

⁶ These and other leadership competencies are discussed in: Vinson, John Nathaniel. *Leadership Competency Needs of U.S. Campus Law Enforcement Administrators*, *Dissertations* (2004), 1147. <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations/1147>

⁷ <http://police.uw.edu/aboutus/divisions/>

other people on campus, along with ensuring that University property is kept secure. In addition to enforcing laws and investigating crimes, UWPD provides other public safety services such as traffic and parking enforcement, emergency management, victim support, and crime prevention education.

The job of a police executive is demanding. The International Association of Chiefs of Police estimates that the tenure for large metropolitan police chiefs is 2.5 years, given the depth and breadth of demands on police executives.⁸ Typical reasons police executives depart include “health, frustration, weariness, political pressures, and new job opportunities.”⁹ While it is not clear if the average tenure of campus police chiefs matches that of major city police executives, they face similar complexities, challenges, and opportunities. While high turnover among police chiefs can lead to organizational disruption, some turnover can be positive, creating “an opportunity for organizational growth and improvement.”¹⁰

III. UWPD Chief John Vinson

Dr. John Vinson became UWPD’s seventh Chief in February, 2009.¹¹ This was Chief Vinson’s first appointment as a departmental chief. He previously worked four years (three as Undersheriff) with the Isabella County Sheriff’s Department in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. He also had served with the Central Michigan University (CMU) campus police and in two Detroit suburbs, Battle Creek and Royal Oak Township. Chief Vinson holds a Masters and a Ph.D. in Public Administration and graduated from the FBI National Academy.¹²

Chief Vinson reports to Dr. Denzil Suite, UW Vice President for Student Life, and his current title is Assistant Vice-President for Student Life/Chief of Police. He is an adjunct faculty member teaching leadership and management courses in the Master’s of Public Administration Program for Central Michigan University, is on the adjunct faculty for Seattle University, and has instructed courses at Western Michigan University, Kirtland Community College, and Montcalm Community College. He is regularly invited to speak and provide training on policing, leadership, and diversity issues across the U.S. and internationally. Chief Vinson is President-Elect for the International Association for Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) and also has professional affiliations with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, and the King County Police Chiefs & Sheriff Association.¹³

⁸ Rainguet and Dodge, *supra*, at 268.

⁹ *Id.* at 284.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 270.

¹¹ For information concerning UWPD’s history and others who have served as Chief, see: <http://police.uw.edu/aboutus/history/>

¹² Chief Vinson received his MSA from Central Michigan University and a Ph.D. from Western Michigan University.

¹³ For further biographical detail, see: <http://police.uw.edu/aboutus/divisions/chief>

When he started with UWPB, Chief Vinson was given the mandate to:

- Transform UWPB into a highly visible, state of the art campus law enforcement agency;
- Develop broader and more sustained outreach to the campus community;
- Develop clear expectations for staff and related accountability metrics; and
- Develop outcome measures for the overall work of the police department.¹⁴

As the Chief established and implemented a strategy to address these goals, he soon recognized a number of impediments, including problems of communication, morale, trust, and respect within the Department that also had been identified in a 2007 UWPB climate review report.¹⁵ There was a sense that some staff members viewed Vinson as second choice to the internal candidate who was passed over, and felt threatened by a Chief who did not rise up through the UWPB ranks and who decided to bring in others from the outside. Details about Chief Vinson having been investigated for an incident in 1994 where charges were not pursued were discovered and publicized by some UWPB employees, causing Chief Vinson frustration, as he believed the facts and issues involved were misconstrued. Then-Vice President of Student Life, Eric Godfrey, addressed a letter to all UWPB employees assuring them the University was aware of the 15-year old charges at the time of Chief Vinson's hire and was satisfied the University had made the right choice in selecting him for Chief. Nonetheless, concerns about the charges remained and were raised as recently as during this review. From the time he was hired through the present, the Chief has also faced claims of race and gender bias, labor strife, and other issues of employee relations.

Despite these challenges, Chief Vinson made significant progress on the mandate he was given when first hired. Individuals interviewed by the team noted many strong points the Chief brought to the job that helped him move the organization forward. Some interviewees made comments along the lines of, "Chief Vinson is smart...charismatic...a change agent...a visionary...driven on vision, mission, and task." Other comments referred to his contributions in growing the Department, such as enhancing officer safety measures, outfitting officers with Tasers, institutionalizing policies and procedures where they were missing, developing IT, formalizing Internal Affairs processes, relocating the Department into a new, better equipped and more centrally located building (summer 2016), and making vehicle and uniform changes.

Chief Vinson is credited with raising salaries among commissioned employees, after a long period without raises. Many interviewees also observed that Chief Vinson helped bring more racial and gender diversity to UWPB and that he is committed to

¹⁴ Chief Vinson provided the team with a document summarizing his experience at UWPB: "University of Washington Police Department Timeline – Historical Context," John Vinson, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President for Student Life/Chief of Police (undated).

¹⁵ *Id.* at 3. Payne, Jon A. "Climate Review – University of Washington Police Department" (October 31, 2007).

working to make the Department stand out among university police departments. To that end, and as noted earlier, Chief Vinson is frequently invited to speak on policing matters and is President-Elect for IACLEA. He advocates for data-driven policing and has had discussions with UW faculty and graduate students about ways to collaborate on research to support the work of UWPD.

Early in his tenure, the Chief took steps to ensure more officers were out on patrol, getting to know UW community members and engaging them in problem solving. UW stakeholders noted that today, officers are approachable and accessible to members of the University community, and several stakeholders provided examples to illustrate officers' responsiveness and patience in investigating criminal complaints and protecting domestic violence victims.¹⁶ Stakeholders also praised Chief Vinson for advocating a harm reduction approach to certain issues, working to address complex issues related to homelessness around the University District, and for ensuring safety in large-scale demonstrations without over-policing. He has endeavored to build UWPD relationships with law enforcement throughout the region, including offering office space for the Seattle Police Department's use in the UWPD building, and has tackled jurisdictional boundary questions with the Seattle Police Department and King County Sheriff's Office.

While his strengths initially helped move the UWPD organization and its mission forward, Chief Vinson has struggled on many fronts the past three or four years. His task-driven leadership style served him well in his early years at UWPD, but the Department has bristled against the approach more recently, rendering him less effective overall. Chief Vinson himself noted the lack of stability in the organization since 2015, as he unsuccessfully sought to establish a more permanent command staff, which has suffered repeated turnover in recent years. Given his promotion to Assistant Vice President for Student Life and frequent trips away from the Department to teach, train, and make presentations, many questioned the Chief's commitment to the agency and attributed self-serving motives for his travel.

IV. UWPD's Overall Culture

A variety of issues emerged from the team's review regarding the Department's organizational health. In considering the overall culture in the Department, the data points to both positive changes and some negative trends.

Organizational culture has been defined as the values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization. Organizational culture includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner

¹⁶ However, a few stakeholders expressed mixed views on how UWPD handled specific incidents. For example, one administrator was surprised by an officer's reluctance to explore a potential racial motive in a criminal incident. Another person was critical about officers' response to a call involving potential domestic violence.

workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time. Also called corporate culture, it's shown in (1) the ways the organization conducts its business, treats its employees, customers, and the wider community; (2) the extent to which freedom is allowed in decision-making, developing new ideas, and personal expression; (3) how power and information flow through its hierarchy; and, (4) how committed employees are toward collective objectives. It affects the organization's productivity and performance, and provides guidelines on customer care and service, product quality and safety, attendance and punctuality, and concern for the environment.¹⁷

The UWPD has had issues of culture impacting the quality of the employee experience, retention, and employee engagement since before Chief Vinson's hiring as Chief in 2009.¹⁸ Concerns such as those relating to transparency, organizational structure, and employee retention have been documented since as early as 2001. The costs of negative cultural attributes include those associated with hiring, training, and developing people who leave prematurely; costs to the University of addressing complaints and labor grievances; and the opportunity costs of not getting the best from people who feel stressed, unhappy, and disenfranchised.

On a positive note, the data gathered through interviews and the survey indicates that employees generally like and respect their UWPD co-workers and have a good relationship with their supervisor:

- 79%¹⁹ of survey respondents indicated they like the people they work with most closely and 76% feel they treat each other with respect
- 75% of respondents perceive their immediate co-workers as consistently striving to perform their jobs well and 69% believe the people they work with most closely are committed to producing top quality work.
- 93% of Patrol Officers and 83% of Officers with non-patrol responsibilities indicated they have a good relationship with their supervisor, and 68% of all respondents agreed the supervisory relationship is good.
- 80% or more of all Officers agreed that their supervisor helps them resolve most of their work problems and issues.
- In interviews, comments were made such as, "the people are awesome...some of the most qualified around...my job is great...people love the university...[a particular officer] is best of the best... great people at a great university..."
- Many interviewees noted a personal connection to UW, such as having attended college there or having a relative or friend who played UW sports.

¹⁷ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/organizational-culture.html>

¹⁸ See, e.g., 2007 Climate Review, *supra*. The team also reviewed three other assessments that touched upon UWPD cultural issues: (1) CALEA, "University of Washington Police Department Assessment Report," (2017); (2) The Business Research Lab, "University of Washington 2003 Employee Satisfaction Survey Police," (October 2003); and, (3) "University of Washington Police Department Organization Study & Recommendation to Adopt Best Practices (2001).

¹⁹ Note that all percentages reported are rounded to the nearest whole figure.

There also appears to be less internal peer-to-peer, unit-to-unit conflict, and employee-supervisor conflict and mistrust than was expressed in the 2007 assessment and earlier studies. While employee engagement remains a concern, as noted in the chart below, the percentage of employees proud to work at UWPD has risen from 32% in 2003 to 47% in 2019 and retention concerns have improved overall since 2001 (though there was a setback in 2015). In 2019, 80% of UWPD employees see their job as allowing them to support the University community and 85% understand how their job fits into the UWPD mission. This is a significant improvement over the 2007 findings.

However, interviewees offered strongly negative cultural descriptions of UWPD such as:

- Toxic work environment
- Toxic culture
- Culture of fear
- Culture of dysfunction
- The organization is consumed with anger, frustration and drama

These descriptions are similar to those noted in the 2007 assessment.

Issues of concern in the current cultural environment at UWPD include²⁰:

Trust	Only 8% of survey respondents agree that, “There is a climate of trust within the Department.”
Respect	76% agree the people they work with most closely treat each other with respect. However, only 19% feel executive leadership treats employees with respect.
Communication	Only 12% of survey respondents agree that, “There is good communication within the Department.”
Inclusiveness	Only 25% feel they are consulted about important decisions affecting their work; just 23% feel their perspective is heard and considered.
Engagement	Only 47% are proud to work for the UWPD and only 31% see UWPD as a good place to work in comparison to other law enforcement agencies. Only 32% said, “It would take a lot to get me to leave the UWPD.”
Leadership	Only 21% agree that, “Executive leadership makes good decisions that improve the Department’s effectiveness” and only 21% trust UWPD executive leadership to guide the Department. ²¹
Need for Change	82% have concerns about the way the Department is functioning and 74% want to see major changes in the Department.

²⁰ Other than where demographic information was sought, each survey question asked that respondents indicate one of the following responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. In summarizing and reporting on the survey results, the categories “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” often are combined into “Agree,” and “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” are combined into “Disagree.”

²¹ While survey questions did not delineate specific members of the executive leadership team, respondent and interviewee comments focused on the roles of Chief and the Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources.

Despite employees generally liking and respecting each other and having good relationships with their supervisors, the overall dispirited internal climate of the Department is striking. The following sections consider ways leadership impacts the organizational climate as well as UWPD's organizational structure, resource allocation, and recruitment, hiring, and retention.

Overall Culture - Recommendations

1. Taking short-term steps to create a healthier and stable organizational culture should be a priority for the incoming Interim Chief. The new Chief should then lead an organizational change strategy to continue to strengthen the culture of the Department and improve the experience of its employees.

2. The new Chief should include, as part of that organizational change strategy, tools to regularly assess employee concerns and organizational health issues, using the positive and negative indicators documented in the external review as a baseline. Results of these assessments should be reviewed with the Vice-President for Student Life to ensure there is a shared understanding of UWPD's organizational health among UPWD leadership, the Chief, and the University administration.

V. Leadership Efficacy

Today's police agency employees "are looking for more forward-thinking, forward-leaning, forward-moving organizations that are capable of understanding their needs and changing with the times when necessary, particularly in the areas of supervisory management, leadership, and talent management practices."²² Effective leaders recognize that leadership is situational and use a variety of methods over time to motivate and positively impact the work environment. "[R]esearch indicates that leaders with the best results do not rely on only one leadership style; they use most of them in a given week – seamlessly and in different measure" depending on the situation.²³ The review team's analysis indicates a significant gap between UWPD leadership and these management best practices and others noted below.

As discussed above, Chief Vinson's leadership style in his early years at UWPD led the organization to make a number of important structural and procedural changes. However, beginning in 2015, the Chief struggled to maintain a cohesive and enduring command staff, which in turn contributed to other problems in the agency. Perhaps, at least in part, the ongoing instability resulted in Chief Vinson moving from an authoritative leadership style to what is perceived as a more coercive,

²² Warren, Gregory A. *Great Leadership Drives High Performance*, *Police Chief Magazine* (undated). <http://www.policchiefmagazine.org/great-leadership-drives-high-performance/?ref=2b0ba0e1b352e187f157fb3ed3dd5dc0>

²³ Goleman, Daniel. *Leadership That Gets Results*, *Harvard Business Review* (March – April 2000).

micro-managing approach. Over time, UWPD employees resented and resisted his efforts. The organizational health of the Department has been negatively impacted in the process.²⁴

Interviewees provided the review team with numerous examples of how Chief Vinson's leadership style negatively impacted employees throughout the organization. While the review team considered all of the information shared by every interviewee, the discussion below focuses on the Chief's struggle to establish a stable command staff, his approach to budget matters and decision-making, the impact of his leadership style on others internally and in the UW community, and the issue of supervisory inconsistency.

A. Difficulty in Establishing Command Staff Stability 2015 - 2018

There has been organizational instability throughout the Department, including with UWPD's executive leadership group, for several years.²⁵ While former Deputy Chief Randy West served UWPD for approximately 5 years (2010 – 2015), three different people served as Deputy Chief between early 2015 and the end of 2017 – one for a matter of days and the other two for about 10 months each. Chief Vinson hired all four of these individuals from outside UWPD, along with other external candidates who filled the roles of Commander, Major, and non-commissioned executive and senior management positions. While bringing in outsiders for command positions can create resentment and distrust with internal candidates and other staff, current and former UWPD employees generally expressed positive comments about nearly all of these external hires.

After the departure of three different Deputy Chiefs brought in from the outside in less than three years, in January 2018 the Chief divided up the Deputy Chief role and appointed two internal people, a Lieutenant and a Commander, as Interim Deputy Chiefs. They served for 11 months and were permanently promoted as Deputy Chiefs in December 2018.²⁶

This lack of stability at the executive leadership level has had repercussions throughout the UWPD organization. At a minimum, the frequent changes provided a negative distraction and fed the internal rumor mill about why certain people left. Another result was that individuals inside the Department frequently were moved up and down the hierarchy, with interim assignments as Deputy Chief, Commander, Major, Lieutenant, and other temporary commissioned and non-commissioned

²⁴ *Id.* Goleman notes that use of a coercive style, beyond a short-term crisis, results in employees feeling disrespected, a loss of ownership, accountability and pride in performance, and a diminished commitment to their own jobs.

²⁵ As noted previously, Chief Vinson acknowledged in his first interview that there has been "instability" at UWPD since 2015.

²⁶ The 11-month "interim" appointments are typical of how Chief Vinson has made a number of hiring and promotional decisions over the years. This approach has negatively impacted retention and supervisory relationships throughout the Department, as discussed below in Section VII.

roles. Not having a stable executive command staff also meant it was difficult for Chief Vinson to get traction on several initiatives he hoped to pursue. This is illustrated by the fact that the description and goals noted under Strategic Initiative 1: Communication and Awareness in the 2012 - 2017 UWPD Strategic Plan are nearly identical to those in the 2020 Strategic Plan, as is true for other areas of the two plans.

The Deputy Chiefs hired by Chief Vinson prior to 2018 all had 20 – 30 years of law enforcement background, each in a variety of capacities, and were viewed as bringing significant “boots on the ground” experience to support the Chief’s vision for the Department. Yet former Deputy Chiefs and other commanders who were interviewed expressed having experienced considerable frustration in working for Chief Vinson, and generally did not feel trusted or empowered by him to carry out command duties. These former executive staff leaders felt confused when the role each had anticipated serving in the organization based on pre-hire conversations with the Chief turned out to be substantively different because of the limitations Chief Vinson imposed after each was hired. Former Deputy Chiefs (and others in UWPD senior management) commented that they were not given latitude or, sometimes the necessary information, to run their operations. Further, they indicated that when the Chief was out of town, those left responsible did not have authority to make any significant decision themselves.

A clear example of how Deputy Chiefs felt disempowered is seen in the Chief’s decision to not share the UWPD budget with them or anyone else other than the Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources. Like the Deputy Chiefs, senior managers and supervisors, some with significant experience overseeing large budgets, all lacked basic knowledge of budgetary opportunities and constraints needed to effectively administer their areas of responsibility and also were left thinking the Chief or other executives must not trust them with financial information. While it is not unusual for there to be some flux in the availability of funds in a public agency, employees throughout the Department were given no explanation about why dollars could be spent at one time and not another. Eighty-three percent (83%) of survey respondents disagreed that “UWPD executive leadership is transparent about budget priorities.” This lack of transparency fed suspicion among some that Departmental funds were being spent inappropriately, in turn contributing to a more general sense of distrust in the organization.

Chief Vinson’s disinclination to share budget details with others in UWPD -- another example of a lack of transparency -- meant he did not get the benefit of their perspective and input when setting budget priorities; decision-making can suffer as a result. Further, strategic planning is undermined by not knowing if funds will be available to support initiatives; neither the 2012 nor 2020 Strategic Plan address the financial resources needed to meet the various goals listed.

As one UW campus stakeholder noted, given limited resources and competing priorities, a smart leader should be especially eager to involve others in budget

decision-making. Including those impacted by budget decisions allows them to better understand operational limitations, appreciate the need to set priorities, and accept final budget allocations.²⁷

On non-budget related matters, the Chief met often with UWPD executive leadership and senior management and verbally invited input or “push back,” though interviewees described him as defensive and unable or unwilling to accept criticism of ideas he proposed. Numerous people gave personal examples of disagreeing with the Chief on some matter or being perceived by him as having been disloyal in some way, with the result that the Chief did not speak to the person for weeks afterward (they were “given the cold shoulder” and “walked on eggshells”), reassigned the individual to a position with less responsibility (they were “sent to Siberia”), took away equipment, office space, or access to information (he “froze out” the person), or in some other way took punitive action against the “offending” employee. The experience and perception that employees are treated poorly after disagreeing with the Chief has had a chilling impact on the willingness of employees to openly participate in decision-making, created a fear of retaliation among many, and likely deprived decisions of critical information from people close to the issue or problem. Effective organizations depend on their employees to be able to express opposing views and are willing to explore alternatives to find the best course of action. Yet, only 28% of all UWPD survey respondents agreed with the statement “I would feel comfortable sharing my thoughts with executive leaders, even if I disagree with what is being proposed.”²⁸

While some external stakeholders believe the Chief has been productively engaged with various community groups, many other internal and external interviewees stated that they did not experience Chief Vinson to be a collaborative leader. For example, several UW stakeholders noted that the Chief did not want to involve University partners in the selection process for a UWPD position that regularly interfaces with these partners. In another hiring situation, the Department involved others by creating a group to interview and evaluate candidates and the Chief initially offered the job to the candidate ranked the highest by the group. However, when that person declined the position, the Chief hired the individual the group had ranked lowest, and did not provide them with an explanation.²⁹

Stakeholders provided several examples of lack of follow through by the Chief after he expressed enthusiasm about a particular idea in meetings with them. For example, students pointed out that the program offered by UWPD to teach women self-defense, which is called Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) training, is very useful,

²⁷ In his second interview, Chief Vinson indicated he had plans to do a table-top budget exercise with Deputy Chiefs this coming spring, though also indicated he wanted them to focus on issues other than the budget.

²⁸ Note that the term “executive leaders” was not defined in the survey and is intended to include other people besides the Chief. However, the great majority of survey and interview comments about decision-making by executives focused on the Chief.

²⁹ The person hired left UWPD after less than a year.

but also should be tailored and offered to others, such as those who are transgender or gender non-conforming. The Chief indicated UWPD would respond with changes to RAD, but has not done so.

Chief Vinson indicated that when he first came to UWPD, he relied heavily on strategic approaches outlined in the book, *Good to Great*, including the notion that a leader must “*first* get the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) *before* you figure out where to drive it.”³⁰ Chief Vinson came into UWPD having a vision of where to drive the “bus,” but over time, he did not know how to get the drivers (or riders) committed to going there.

The 2007 Climate Review pointed out the need for a UWPD leader who, among other attributes, is “particularly effective at team building, empowerment and accountability.”³¹ A more relational style of leadership also is needed at this juncture to inspire, empower, and motivate UWPD employees. This approach to leadership is inclusive, recognizes each individual’s unique contributions to the mission, strives toward transparency, and takes active steps to facilitate effective communication. The Department needs leadership that can foster relationships up and down and across the organization, to help build a culture that enhances trust and confidence and leads to effectiveness in accomplishing the agency’s mission.

B. Leadership Efficacy and First-Line Supervisors

At a recent meeting of the Police Executive Research Forum, involving over 150 police executives, managers, supervisors, and other police professionals, the role of sergeants and first-line supervisors in police agencies was discussed and resulted in the report, *Promoting Excellence in First-Line Supervision: New Approaches to Selection, Training, and Leadership Development*.³² Chiefs and other police executives agreed, “Sergeants (and other first-line supervisors) occupy one of the most important positions in a law enforcement agency.”³³ However, UWPD, as with many agencies, has struggled to fully support Sergeants and other supervisors in their role as agency leaders.

“Out of classification” assignments and shift adjustments for UWPD Sergeants are important factors in the frustration felt by some supervisors. Under Chief Vinson, UWPD had been using Acting Sergeants, Patrol Officers assigned to fill supervisory slots as needed, when a Sergeant was unavailable. The use of Acting Sergeants was challenged as a form of “skimming” work from Sergeants, who are in a different bargaining unit than Officers, and some believe it was used by UWPD to avoid paying overtime to Sergeants or Lieutenants. The most recent collective bargaining contract prohibits the use of Acting Sergeants. Sergeants and Lieutenants are in the

³⁰ Collins, Jim. *Good to Great*, HarperCollins Publishers (2001), p.44.

³¹ *Supra*, 2007 Climate Review.

³² Available on PERF’s website at <https://www.policeforum.org/free-online-documents>

³³ *Id.* at 12.

same bargaining unit and UWPD also routinely assigned Lieutenants to fill in for Sergeants as needed. However, when the Department stopped the practice of using Acting Sergeants, the Chief also unilaterally decided to no longer assign Lieutenants to cover for Sergeants, deeming it an “out of classification” role. Thus, since these changes have gone into effect, Sergeants must accept more shift adjustment assignments (working outside or in addition to their regular schedule), resulting in a number of grievances. UWPD’s increased use of shift adjustments served as a significant motivator in the decision by the group of six Sergeants, one former Sergeant, and one Lieutenant to file a letter of concerns with the UW Board of Regents.

In his memo in response to the letter of concerns submitted to the Board of Regents, Chief Vinson indicated the group’s dissatisfaction related to efforts by UWPD to enhance supervision and supervisory accountability.³⁴ Vinson noted that UWPD’s first strategic plan, completed in 2012, identified supervisory consistency as a goal and that plan developers noted, “providing employees with consistent expectations improves and enhances our ability to provide excellent customer service.”³⁵ Supervisory consistency was again identified as a continued goal in UWPD’s 2020 Strategic Plan.

Chief Vinson indicated that the current Deputy Chiefs have been charged with improving supervisory consistency, which has resulted in changes to processes and procedures, including increased accountability.³⁶ The Chief asserted that patrol supervisors have resisted making changes to improve communication with officers or adopt a consistent approach in leading their teams.³⁷ Further, according to the Chief, the increased accountability has caused some supervisors to struggle with balancing leadership with effective shift management and has created additional hostility among some officers and supervisors.³⁸ Vinson concluded with, “these increased accountability measures, coupled with initial contract negotiations, is possibly what triggered this coordinated complaint and demands...”³⁹

During a subsequent interview with Chief Vinson, he clarified that there is a lack of follow-through from the Deputy Chief to the Lieutenant and down to the Sergeants on a number of issues. “Supervisory inconsistency” apparently most often represents a lack of protocols and processes in place to ensure that everyone strives toward the same expectations and standards. While former Deputy Chief West helped develop a number of policies and processes, efforts to complete others were

³⁴ Memo to Dr. Denzil Suite, Vice President for Student Life, from John Vinson, Assistant Vice President for Student Life/Chief of Police, Dated September 28, 2018, Re: Response to letter received from some WFSE members, dated 9/13/2018 (Vinson Response Memo).

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ *Id.* Chief Vinson also notes that there have been complaints by officers against supervisors and among supervisors, presumably related to supervisory consistency issues.

³⁹ *Id.*

largely stalled due to command staff turnover since 2015. The Chief gave the example of a Deputy Chief's recent development of a report-writing template as a step in the direction of consistency. And, as noted above, it appears that Officers have been exposed to a variety of supervisors – regular Sergeants, Officers in Acting Sergeant roles, and Lieutenants filling in for Sergeants. This further complicates the analysis of “supervisory inconsistency.”

It is not unreasonable to think there is at least some supervisory inconsistency, though the data does not show this as being a significant theme. In fact, the expressed management concern with Sergeant inconsistency stands in contrast to Officers' reported experience of their supervisors. For example:

- 93% of Patrol Officers agree or strongly agree, “I have a good relationship with my supervisor”.
- 80% of Patrol Officers agree or strongly agree, “My supervisor is fair and demonstrates personal integrity”.
- 80% of Patrol Officers agree or strongly agree, “My supervisor helps me to be successful in my job”.
- 80% of Patrol Officers agree or strongly agree, “My supervisor can help me resolve most of my work problems or issues”.
- 80% of Patrol Officers agree or strongly agree, “In general, my performance evaluations accurately reflect my performance”.
- 73% of Patrol Officers do not believe their supervisors have the authority to make decisions related to the scope of their responsibility.

These UWPD survey results are markedly higher and more positive than research statistics nationally that indicated “approximately 66 percent of law enforcement officers felt that their supervisors were ineffective and possessed the qualities of inadequate leaders (poor leadership skills, politically motivated, caring only about themselves, micromanagement, etc.).”⁴⁰

Additionally, a number of interviewees spoke highly of UWPD supervisors, including Officers and others. For example, a senior management member stated, “Most Lieutenants and Sergeants are exceptional, but some are disengaged because of their perceptions about the organization.”

In sum, the interviews and survey did not point to supervisory inconsistency as a major problem, although more in-depth analysis is beyond the scope of this review. Regardless, because of the importance of first-line supervisors, and the fact that both the 2012 and the 2020 UWPD Strategic Plans identified supervisory inconsistency as an issue, to the extent the Chief has not yet put in place clear policies and standardized processes, along with dedicated training and mentoring, that should be a management priority.

⁴⁰ Garcia, Hector R. *Heart-Focused Leadership: A Shifting Police Leadership Paradigm*, Police Chief (October 2018).

UWPD is encouraged to consider the full PERF report on Promoting Excellence in First-Line Supervision, noted above, and the recommended steps police agencies can take to improve supervision. Further, the Department must identify alternatives to using shift adjustments as a way to address a shortage of Sergeants on any given shift. Options might include creating an overtime reserve within the Department's limited discretionary funding or changing the shift structure and Sergeant/Officer ratio so that more Sergeants are available to fill in as needed.

Efficacy of Leadership and First-Line Supervision - Recommendations

1. To build a culture that reflects the positive values and behaviors that support effectiveness in accomplishing the Department's mission, UWPD's next Chief should have demonstrated experience in leading organizational culture transformation while maintaining operational effectiveness and stability. Operating primarily from a relational leadership approach that fosters and facilitates relationships up and down and across the agency, the Chief should focus on developing collaborative decision-making, team-building, employee inclusivity and empowerment, transparency, and effective communication.
2. The University should consider the degree to which the next Chief has external roles that take the focus away from fulfilling the mission of the Department, and which of these roles best support the University's and UWPD's interests. This is not meant to suggest the Chief be precluded from professional activity outside the University, but rather that those opportunities be weighed against other UWPD management priorities.
3. UWPD's leadership should follow through on all commitments made to University stakeholders, building productive and collaborative external partnerships.
4. UWPD's leadership should develop policies and protocols for supervisors to help ensure consistent use of best practices and accountability; support supervisory training and mentoring; and consider other steps to improve first-line supervision where needed.
5. UWPD's leadership should identify alternatives to using shift adjustments for Sergeants, including a cost/benefit analysis for different approaches, and solicit input from Officers, Sergeants, Lieutenants, and others impacted before changes are made.

VI. Organizational Structure

An International Association of Police Chiefs (IACP) article describes the role of organizational design in 21st century policing, “Structure primarily refers to how power and authority are dispersed in the organization. Typically, structure is manifested in four ways: specialization, organizational shape, distribution of power, and departmentalization.”⁴¹ While there are similarities in structure between large and small departments, there are also significant differences. “One of the biggest [differences] is the amount of specialization present in the organization,” as well as the number of supervisory levels.⁴² The team identified problematic issues associated with UWPD’s organizational structure, including its top-heavy command/executive staff, bureau over-specialization, and the number of supervisory levels, at least in Patrol.

Specialization refers to distinct units within an organization and allows for operational expertise and efficiency. “Many police departments divide the work of the agency among many units or divisions, such as patrol, criminal investigation, and administration, among others. Patrol may be divided among several districts and shifts. The task of criminal investigation maybe divided into the investigation of homicides, property crimes, sensitive crimes, and so forth. The amount of specialization in the division of labor of a department is largely a function of the size of the organization, as is the number of levels in the organizational hierarchy. A primary disadvantage of specialization is that with more units and divisions, effective control and coordination of the units becomes more challenging.”⁴³

The hierarchy of authority or chain of command in a police agency “has direct implications for supervision and formal communication. With a chain of command, communication is to follow a known path from subordinate to supervisor...There is no optimal number of levels of authority,” though “larger police departments have more levels of hierarchy than smaller ones because with more personnel comes a need for more supervisors and managers.”⁴⁴

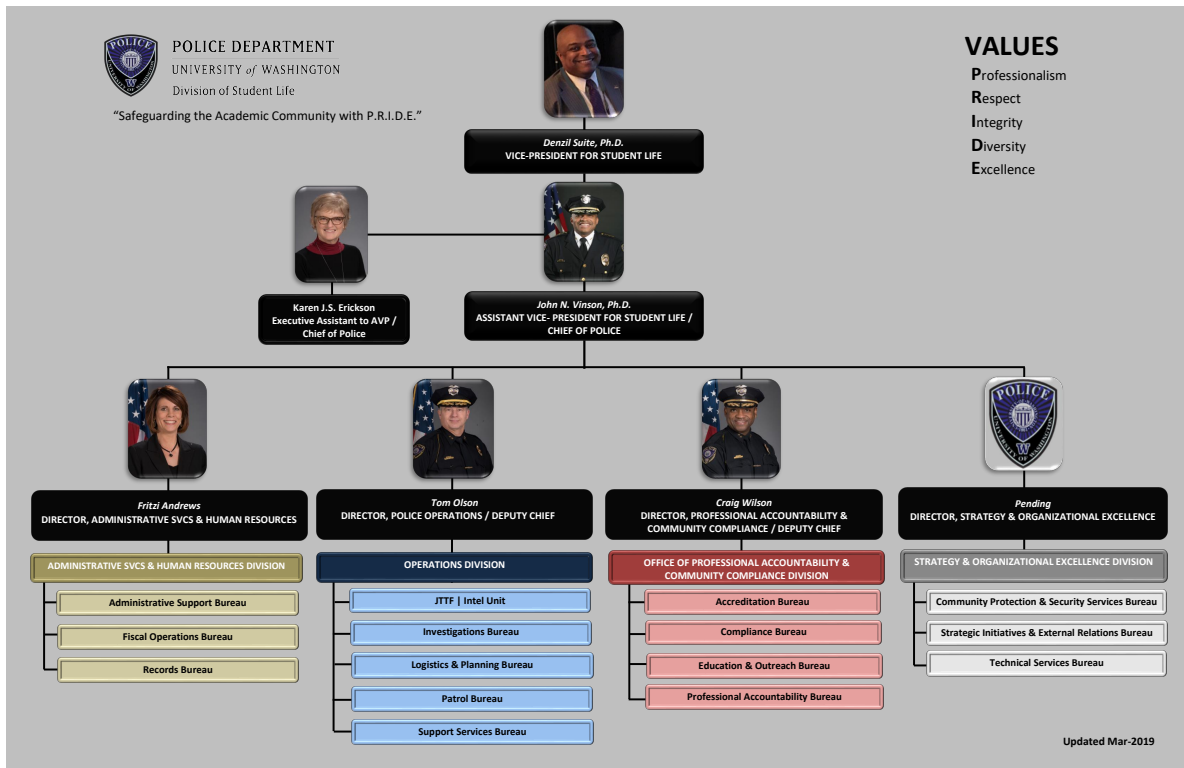
UWPD’s bureaus reflect the core functions of patrol operations and investigations; human resources, budget, records and administration; and, accountability and compliance, as reflected on the organizational chart:

⁴¹ Switzer, Merlin. *The Role of Organizational Design in Twenty-First Century Policing Organizations*, The Police Chief (August 2010). <http://www.policiechiefmagazine.org/the-role-of-organizational-design-in-twenty-first-century-policing-organizations/>

⁴² Foundations for the Study of Police, Chapter 3: The Characteristics and Structure of Police Organizations. https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/80717_Brandl_Police_in_America_Chapter_3.pdf

⁴³ *Id.* at 41.

⁴⁴ *Id.*



In an initial information request, the team asked for an exact count of employees and their placement on an organizational chart. It was difficult to determine from the documents provided exactly how many FTE positions were available and filled at any given time, in part because of frequent changes in assignment and changes to the organizational structure over time. However, UWPD, with approximately 81 commissioned and non-commissioned employees (including security guards), is a small department, though its organizational structure more closely resembles that of much larger police agencies, with a significant degree of specialization. There are four divisions and 14 bureaus (and 1 "unit") with specialized emphases and differing numbers of employees and levels of supervision. Out of a total of 28 Officers, 22 are assigned to Patrol, three are Detectives in the Investigations Bureau, and one Officer works in the JTFF/Intel Unit, all falling under the Operations Division. The last two Officers are in the Education and Outreach Bureau, under the Professional Accountability and Community Compliance Division. The Patrol Officers report to one of six Sergeants, who all report to one Lieutenant, who in turn is responsible to the Deputy Chief, who reports to the Chief.⁴⁵

As one interviewee noted, such "a large vertical stack" in the Patrol Bureau exacerbates the sorts of communication issues that were already causing problems within the Department. "You lose a lot when you have to go to the top of the

⁴⁵ Further, although the plan has since been indefinitely postponed, steps were taken in late 2018 to promote a Commander, a person who would serve over the Operations Lieutenant, adding yet another level in that chain of command.

pyramid to get a decision...Information, knowledge, and passion is lost along the way.”⁴⁶ In contrast, other areas of the Department have fewer levels of supervision. Examples of two bureaus with one less supervisory level include Education and Outreach, with two Officers reporting to a Manager who reports to the Deputy Chief, and the Investigations Bureau, where Detectives report to Lieutenant who reports to a Deputy Chief. Other Bureaus have even less hierarchy, such as seen in the JTTF/Intel Unit with one Officer reporting directly to a Deputy Chief. A flatter organization has fewer levels of organizational structure and provides preferred spans of control (the number of employees for whom a supervisor has responsibility.) The advantages of this approach can include “better communication among organizational divisions and levels, increased financial and personnel responsibility, greater flexibility, and increased delegation by supervisors among subordinates.”⁴⁷

Sixty-six percent (66%) of the employees who responded to the survey conducted by the team do not see the Department’s organizational structure as making sense to them. Interviewees noted that in their view the organization is top heavy, with four Division Directors/Deputy Chiefs reporting to the Chief and three supervisory levels between Officers and the Chief. Others focused on the many bureaus across divisions, noting that high-level, highly paid management positions exist with ambiguous duties, little or no decision-making authority, and sometimes only one or no subordinates. Along with the single Officer running the JTTF/Intel Unit discussed above, one person (who is working part-time and from home) with the title “Compliance Manager” staffs the Accreditation Bureau; and, Clery reporting duties that fall under the Compliance Bureau have shifted among several people, including outside the Bureau, since the start of the team’s review. The JTTF Officer and Accreditation Bureau Manager have no subordinates and the last person assigned to the Compliance Bureau had no subordinates.

In addition, a consistent complaint heard from interviewees relates to frequent reorganizations, reported to occur every 6 months to a year, and the routine reassignment of duties among employees. In the four months after this review began in late November 2018, the UWPD structure changed at least once, as represented by the organizational chart available online; when the interim Deputy Chiefs received their permanent promotions, they were given different division assignments, and there were changes in the bureaus reporting to each of the four divisions. For example, the Records Bureau was moved from the Strategy & Organizational Excellence Division to Administrative Services & Human Resources; though it is not clear where they resided in the chain of command previously, JTTF/Intel and Support Services were added to the Operations Division; and, the Information Systems and Technology Bureau became the Technical Services Bureau under the Strategy & Organizational Excellence Division, though it is not clear if the

⁴⁶ Switzer, *supra*, citing personal interview with Sarah Miller Caldicott at the Institute of Management Consultant’s Annual Conference in Reno, Nevada, October 28, 2008.

⁴⁷ Lane, Troy. *Span of Control For Law Enforcement Agencies*, Police Chief (October 2006).

change was in name only.⁴⁸ There does not appear to be anyone who manages the frequent organizational change, leading to confusion about roles and responsibilities. For example, two managers recently were reassigned, but both were unclear themselves about their new span of duties. Others in the organization also were puzzled, stating they were not provided any explanation about the changes. This is consistent with the survey result that only 17% of employees agree with the statement, “The department’s executive leadership effectively communicates changes about the department.”

Interviewees observed that frequent reorganizations and job reassignments can be detrimental to operations, including being negatively perceived in the community. Some also attributed the lack of institutionalization of accreditation processes, property and evidence management, and other protocols, to be at least partially a function of recurrent reorganization, reassignment, and turnover, with new people constantly trying to learn systems and procedures.

While there is no one ideal organizational structure for law enforcement agencies, UWPD’s is top heavy, overly specialized (particularly where only one or two individuals comprise an entire bureau), and has more supervisory levels than necessary, at least in the Patrol Bureau. These structural issues, along with frequent reorganizations and reassignment of personnel, contribute to problems related to decision-making, communication, and transparency discussed elsewhere in this report.

Organizational Structure - Recommendations

1. While some reorganization is expected with upcoming changes in UWPD leadership, the Department should work toward building stability and avoid frequent position reassignments and reorganizations. When such changes do occur, UWPD should be cognizant of impacts on accomplishing its mission and building organizational excellence, and should strive to clearly communicate the rationale behind changes to everyone impacted.

2. In looking at the preferred organizational structure for UWPD, the new Chief should bring together employee representatives from throughout the Department to consider approaches to organizational structure for an agency of this size that will most effectively serve the mission of the Department and allow for improved communication, information sharing, and collaboration, as well as effective allocation of people and capabilities.

⁴⁸ The overview of each of the four Divisions and Bureaus on the UWPD website represents an older version of the organizational structure, but was the only organizational description made available to the team. Thus, it was difficult to determine if structural changes over time represent substantive differences in responsibilities for the involved divisions and bureaus. Also, there were no descriptions on the website or otherwise for the new bureaus that have been created.

VII. Resource Allocation

Resource allocation was a complex topic to assess during this review, in large part because of the complete lack of transparency around budgeting matters at UWPD. The impacts of this lack of transparency were discussed above under Leadership Efficacy. Because employees have virtually no information about the Department's financial assets and liabilities, it is difficult to assess the reason for the survey results on this aspect of agency management. Only 14% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that, "Executive leadership makes good decisions on how to allocate the department's resources", and only 29% agree or strongly agree that, "The department's budget promotes operational effectiveness." For some employees, their lack of confidence in effective resource allocation could be because no budget information is made available. For others, it could be that their concerns stem from lack of transparency regarding requests for equipment, training, overtime or delays in filling vacancies.

UW community partners familiar with the Department's budget stressed that UWPD, like others throughout UW, has been required to reduce its budget over time. Also, because UWPD went significantly over budget at one point, it operates under a deficit mitigation plan that includes a schedule to pay back to the University the funds overspent. As a result, UWPD has very limited discretionary funding, with the bulk of its budget dedicated to personnel costs, such as salaries and benefits.

Though the team was provided with some budget details, the information provided is not sufficient to fully evaluate the Department's spending priorities and practices. Such an evaluation should be done, and should take into account as well UWPD's strategic plan. The current strategic plan does not include projected cost or staffing implications for the goals that were set. As previously noted, involving people impacted by budgeting decisions in helping to set priorities would educate staff throughout the organization about the budgeting process and allow everyone to better appreciate trade-offs that may be required when there are limited resources.

One concern about resource allocation that was voiced by several interviewees relates to what employees perceive as a lack of commitment to certain initiatives the Department was pursuing, but did not plan for the necessary funding. Interviewees complained that the Department embarks on an initiative, but then the project cannot be implemented in whole or in part due to lack of funds. For example, because bicycle theft is a major property crime of concern on campus, UWPD invested funds and employee time in a Bait Bike program, a system allowing Officers to track stolen bicycles to apprehend suspected thieves. However, the Department ultimately would not invest in cell phones necessary to roll out the project, leaving UWPD in a position of not taking advantage of other equipment purchased, nor able to follow through on the goals of the Bait Bike program.

Another resource allocation concern that has caused confusion and frustration among employees is UWPD's propensity to classify new hires and promotions as

“temporary,” “interim,” “acting,” or “in training.” Even though a position is included in the Department’s total FTE count as “unfilled,” once someone is hired or promoted into the job, it is often initially only in an interim/acting status. Employees interviewed expressed that they do not understand why positions that are funded under the budget as permanent positions do not get filled with permanent employees. Interviewees assume that assigning new employees to temporary status rather than permanent allows UWPD the flexibility to have people doing the work of a position without going through a formal hiring or promotion process, and without receiving any associated higher pay or benefits. Employees also expressed concern that this has other unintended consequences, such as individuals not wanting to apply for positions given the tenuous nature of temporary employment. Interim appointments are used throughout the Department, with both commissioned and non-commissioned employees.

Using a temporary or interim classification potentially allows for budget savings while UWPD ascertains if an employee is a good fit for the Department and whether the budget supports a permanent position in the long run. UWPD also does not have to meet all UW job-posting requirements if it hires a temporary employee who has worked for the Department for a specified period of time. But while this approach might serve managerial interests, it can create administrative issues and employee predicaments.

UWPD’s use of “Acting Sergeants” - Officers temporarily assigned out of classification to supervisory duties - served as a major issue in the last round of contract negotiations between UW and the WFSE Local 1488 Police Management Bargaining Unit. WFSE claimed the practice amounted to impermissible skimming, bargaining unit work assigned to non-bargaining unit employees,⁴⁹ and UWPD agreed to stop the practice. While WFSE asserts that the Department should commit overtime funds for use when Sergeants or Lieutenants need to cover a shift for a Sergeant who is on leave, UWPD has been using shift adjustments, requiring Sergeants to change their regular work hours to provide coverage. Sergeants have complained about the inconvenience involved, though UWPD maintains it has limited funds available to offer voluntary overtime as an alternative.⁵⁰

Another example of impacts in the use of a temporary classification is seen with the current Deputy Chiefs, who both worked in an “interim” capacity from January to December 2018, when they were officially promoted. Thus, during most of 2018, one Interim Deputy Chief was still classified as a Commander and the other as a Lieutenant for budget purposes, and each received the pay associated with the lower rank. Further, Lieutenants are members of WFSE Local 1488 and there are

⁴⁹ *Western Washington University*, Decision 12852 (PSRA, 2018).

⁵⁰ When the Department ceased using Acting Sergeants, it also stopped its past practice of having Lieutenants cover for Sergeants, as needed.

potential implications for the bargaining rights of a unionized employee serving in a managerial capacity, such as the right to overtime pay.⁵¹

Other issues related to temporary employment classifications came to light in interviews of current and former non-commissioned UWPD employees, in both management and line positions. They were classified as “temporary” when hired, but told that their positions were expected to become permanent within a set period of time (e.g., 6 months or a year). After working in the Department for the initial period, they subsequently were told that the position still was not permanent and their temporary status was extended. Some interviewees working on a temporary basis also were frustrated because they did not receive full benefits. Benefits available to temporary employees who worked for UWPD are tied to the UW job category in which they fall and when they worked at the Department. As of January 2018, all employees receive sick leave benefits, though such benefits might not have been immediately available to UWPD temporary employees prior to 2018. Other benefits, such as paid vacation time or retirement contributions, may or may not be provided to temporary employees, depending on whether UW and the Department categorized them as professional staff. Interviewees categorized as temporary had hoped to continue working in the Department, but found themselves in the difficult predicament of having to decide whether to continue indefinite temporary work with lower benefits or to seek employment elsewhere. A number of individuals left UWPD under these circumstances, which was problematic for them and for those in UWPD who lost the benefit of their contributions.

The Department used a different approach with interim positions in the Communications Bureau’s Dispatch Lead in Training Program, “created and designed to prepare dispatchers interested in the opportunity to apply for a leadership role.”⁵² The program ran 2016 – 2017 and was intended as a means to expose a group of employees to the supervisory role by using a 10-month rotational system to provide on-the-job training and assessment, to gauge interest and aptitude for a long-range appointment. However, participants became frustrated over time. First, they resented the extra work involved without comparable pay and benefits. Second, they felt the program ultimately negatively impacted them as a dispatch team, as it amounted to a very lengthy promotional process in which everyone was vying for the same job in a very public way. In the end, no Lead

⁵¹ At the same time the permanent Deputy Chief positions were announced, there was an internal announcement for an Interim Commander. The only person who applied was an Officer who had relatively recently been hired laterally. Some interviewees stated that they were worried about potential problems of reporting to an individual who had been a subordinate and now skipped the ranks of Sergeant and Lieutenant to become an Interim Commander, but who might not get permanently appointed to the job and be returned to Officer status. Ultimately, the decision to fill the position was postponed indefinitely.

⁵² See, UWPD Internal Recruitment, Lead Dispatcher – In Training Position, Unit: Communications and Records, Open until Wednesday, October 5, 2016 (describing the purpose of the program, training schedule, essential functions, and other program details).

Dispatcher was appointed, causing further irritation and erosion of trust among the employees involved.

Another common resource allocation theme that surfaced relates to UWPD's triple accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), the Washington Association for Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). A police agency accredited by a national or state organization of law enforcement executives that sets operational standards can help ensure that the organization has adopted professional policies and procedures. Law enforcement agency accountability is enhanced and through involvement of internal and external stakeholders, the accreditation process can provide greater operational transparency.

For UWPD, however, the question raised by interviewees was along the lines of, "Does triple accreditation add significant value over that of a single accreditation?" UWPD has employed an individual full-time to manage its triple accreditation, though that person is now transitioning out of the Department and only working part-time and from home. The accreditation process is time consuming and requires that people throughout the Department submit information on a routine basis to the accreditation manager, who then compiles and submits proof to the accrediting body that UWPD is meeting the standards required for certification. However, in part because of turnover and frequent reassignment of duties, the Department has not institutionalized the accreditation process and much effort is required to secure all of the organizational evidence necessary for compliance from employees who may already be over-extended. Though there is overlap in a majority of standards required by CALEA, WASPC, and IACLEA, the format and timing for submission of proof of compliance varies, such that the Department is continually working to meet one or more of the accrediting body's requirements. UWPD has not articulated the benefit to the Department or UW of devoting significant resources to attaining and maintaining triple accreditation, leaving many employees questioning the motivations involved.

If the Department chooses to make its budget and resource allocation more transparent, it will benefit from more input in setting funding priorities. In the process, UWPD should consider aligning its short and long-term goals with available resources and alternative approaches to addressing the problem of coverage for Sergeants who are on leave. The Department also should reconsider its extensive use of "temporary," "interim," "acting," and "in training" job classifications and evaluate the value added in maintaining triple accreditation under CALEA, WASPC, and IACLEA.

Resource Allocation - Recommendations

1. The Interim Chief and Chief should evaluate the Department's budget to determine if changes should be made to current spending priorities in the short-term, including the need to assess whether the budget aligns with UWPD's Strategic Plan.
2. The Interim Chief and Chief should make the Department's budget and resource constraints, and consideration of allocation decisions, more transparent for executive leadership and senior management, and seek input from those employees impacted in setting funding priorities.
3. UWPD's leadership should reconsider the extensive use of "temporary," "interim," "acting," and "in training" job classifications, strive for more transparency as to the rationale behind any classification used, and balance the value of their use as a budget management tool with the potential negative impacts for employees.
4. UWPD's leadership should evaluate whether to continue to invest resources in maintaining triple accreditation under CELEA, WASPC, and IACLEA, weighing the value against negative fiscal and operational impacts for UWPD. The decision and its rationale – to continue or to change – needs to then be clearly communicated to all employees.

VIII. Recruitment, Selection, and Retention

Law enforcement executives generally agree that one of the most challenging issues they are facing involves recruiting, selecting, and retaining commissioned employees. In 2006, it was estimated that more than 80% of police agencies had sworn positions they were unable to fill,⁵³ and the problem has continued into the present. There are varying explanations for the problem, including tighter budgets and the high cost to recruit, hire, equip, and fully train a police officer from the time they submit their application to the time they can function independently; negative perceptions of law enforcement growing out of high profile policing events; and, a lack of qualified applicants, particularly in a time of low unemployment.⁵⁴

The selection process for entry-level and lateral officer candidates includes completing and submitting a written application, an oral board/panel interview, a background investigation, and polygraph, medical and physiological exams. Physical

⁵³ Woska, William J. *Police Officer Recruitment: A Public Sector Crisis*, *The Police Chief* (October 2006).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Meade, Brett. *Recruiting, Selecting, and Retaining Law Enforcement Officers*, National Police Foundation. <https://www.policefoundation.org/recruiting-selecting-and-retaining-law-enforcement-officers/>

agility and written tests, and a ride-along with a Field Training Officer, also are required of entry-level applicants. They must attend and graduate from the State's Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA), which is a three-month program⁵⁵, and then successfully complete the UWPD Field Training Officer (FTO) program. Candidates who previously have completed the BLEA, and lateral candidates, may be required to complete the 80 hours Basic Law Enforcement Equivalency Academy.⁵⁶

In 2015, after higher than usual turnover, UWPD was down to 16 Officers, about half the usual number, with significant impacts on mandatory overtime and Officer morale.⁵⁷ As the Department considered ways to address the problem, it reviewed the role of UW Human Resources (UWHR) in the recruitment and hiring process, and considered ways to expedite hiring. UWHR was responsible for advertising positions, receiving applications, and reviewing basic qualifications of applicants, along with being involved on oral boards. Rather than relying so extensively on UWHR, by 2017 the Department assumed more of the duties involved. "The goal was to streamline the recruitment and selection process, increase retention, and focus on improving morale for all of UWPD's commissioned and civilian team members."⁵⁸

While UWHR continued to post job openings for police officers, and applications were submitted through the University's jobs portal, all applications then were forwarded to the Department for review and consideration as to next steps. UWHR also no longer was involved with the oral board/interview panels. The team was told that as a result, the processing time is down to 2 – 4 months.

The Department also worked to hire more lateral officers, those who had worked for another police agency in Washington or elsewhere, which was another way to shorten the hiring and training process for commissioned officers. UWPD instituted the "EZ-Hire" program for lateral candidates, with the hope that the Department would recruit more qualified and experienced candidates and that they could move through the application process more quickly. There are no written or physical tests or associated out of pocket costs and laterals proceed through a tailored FTO program, all of which could be attractive to those candidates.⁵⁹ The majority of

⁵⁵ The 720-hour BLEA curriculum is designed to provide recruit officers with the basic knowledge and skills necessary for law enforcement service. Instructional blocks include: Criminal Law and Procedures; Traffic Enforcement; Cultural Awareness; Communication Skills; Emergency Vehicle Operations Course; Firearms; Crisis Intervention; Patrol Procedures; Criminal Investigation; and Defensive Tactics.

⁵⁶ The steps outlined for the officer selection process are summarized from the UW job posting #153368 - Campus Police Officer, Entry & Lateral.

⁵⁷ <https://komonews.com/news/local/uw-police-officers-blame-toxic-workplace-for-staffing-shortage>

⁵⁸ *Supra*, Vinson Response Memo, at 2.

⁵⁹ See UWPD description for lateral hire process:
<http://police.uw.edu/aboutus/divisions/opst/hiring/>

commissioned hires over the past couple of years have been hired laterally from other law enforcement agencies. Over time, officer turnover has decreased, there have been 3 or 4 hires during the pendency of the team's review, and staffing levels are close to normal.

Nonetheless, the letter of concerns submitted to the Board of Regents, and numerous interviewees, outlined perceived problems with the Department's hiring process. UW community stakeholders noted that they were not included in considering candidates for UWPD positions overlapping with their interests and expertise. They also pointed to some unusual hiring practices by UWPD, such as conducting group interviews of candidates, rather than interviewing each person individually, which falls outside best practices. Stakeholders also were surprised that the Department brought in people from out of state, rather than using local partners, in the oral boards/interview panels held for the promotion of the Deputy Chiefs in late 2018.

Over half of the employees who responded to the survey disagreed with the statement that "the department's hiring selection process is unbiased and fair" and 62% agreed with the statement, "Promotions within the department don't always follow applicable rules." As noted in Section V.A, an individual hired by the Chief was rated lowest by the interview panel that met with each candidate. Interviewees also indicated that, according to applicants for both commissioned and non-commissioned jobs, Chief Vinson routinely told applicants they had a job at UWPD, despite the applicants not having completed all requisite steps. While it is commendable that the Chief is an advocate for UWPD, employees viewed this as the Chief appearing to "guarantee" a job to some. Interviewees also pointed out that several employees were given non-commissioned positions in the Department after failing to complete BLEA or the FTO program.

Related to these concerns is a belief by interviewees that at least two or three of the more recent officer hires did not receive a regular background check or were not required to take a polygraph test. Due to UWPD concerns regarding employee privacy, the review team was not allowed to review employee files and therefore asked UWHR to examine personnel files and background check information for several Officers alleged to have not gone through the background and polygraph steps in the hiring process. While UWHR was not permitted to examine the content of background investigation reports, polygraph tests, or medical and psychological evaluations, a UWHR representative examined the background file for each of these Officers and was shown documents that appeared to be polygraph test results, drug test results, medical and psychological evaluation results, and a background investigation report for each of these Officers.⁶⁰ Further, UWHR was told that the third party vendor conducting background checks for UWPD accessed some

⁶⁰ The inability of the review team to get access to these files to investigate the concerns that were raised was a significant limitation and impeded the team's ability to draw evidence-based conclusions about the integrity of UWPD's hiring process.

background information concerning one of these Officers that was not shared with UWPD.

Another widespread concern expressed by interviewees is that the individual appointed by the Chief as Director of the Administrative Services and Human Resources Division does not have background or experience in many of the key responsibilities related to HR and budget. Many interviewees also expressed concern that she works far too many hours most weeks, whether because she's struggling with those duties or is tasked with more work than manageable by a single person.⁶¹ Either way, the situation clearly impacts employee perceptions regarding the effectiveness and legitimacy of UWPD's HR and budget functions.

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of survey respondents disagreed that UWPD "takes action to retain competent, motivated employees." The Department began conducting exit interviews in late 2017 and the team was given copies of eight forms summarizing feedback provided by those individuals who participated in the process.⁶² These exit interviews and interviews conducted by the team of former employees, commissioned and non-commissioned and from all levels of the Department, pointed to a variety of reasons for employees leaving UWPD. A few pursued career opportunities or relocated for personal reasons, or temporary or student positions ended for some with no option of a permanent job. Others complained they left because of poor treatment they received as women, because they did not feel empowered to do their jobs, because of poor supervisor/officer communications, or to move to an organization that better fit their work style.

Exit interview participants, people interviewed by the team, and survey respondents also criticized the adequacy of UWPD's training program. For example, 65% of survey respondents disagree that there is a training plan for each employee and 5/8 of the exit interviewees rated UWPD training as "fair" or "poor", rather than "good" or "excellent." Several examples were provided where employees did not receive assurance they could attend out-of-town training or a professional conference until a day or two before they were scheduled to travel. An executive leader noted that until the hiring of the Community Engagement and Talent Development Manager in the summer 2018, UWPD lacked the resources to focus on training, and ensuring individual training plans are put into place is now a responsibility for that Manager.

Another issue included with the letter of concerns submitted to the Board of Regents related to inadequate active shooter training for UWPD. After this review began, short session active shooter training was provided during roll calls and a day of active shoot simulation training was scheduled for mid-December 2018, though interviewees indicated more simulation-based training was needed. A large-scale

⁶¹ The Director indicated to a review team member that she regularly works 12+ hours a day.

⁶² According to information given to the team, 24 people separated from UWPD between July 2017 and December 2018, though the majority did not participate in exit interviews.

training is contemplated for later in 2019. The Department is encouraged to work together with law enforcement agencies in the area on this and other training that would benefit from region-wide coordination. UWPD also can consider additional avenues, such as the multi-disciplinary, scenario based active shooter training offered for first responders at Texas State University, supported through a recent grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing.⁶³

Recruitment, Selection, and Retention - Recommendations

1. UWPD's leadership should assess the Department's anticipated short and long-term hiring needs and develop a recruitment, selection, and retention strategy that minimizes the impact of employee turnover and maximizes the opportunity to hire and retain highly qualified employees committed to the mission of UWPD and UW.
2. UWPD's leadership should develop and communicate agency-wide training priorities, identify training and development goals for each individual employee, create a timeline for implementation, and ensure resources are available to meet these objectives.
3. The Chief should develop a shared understanding with the UW administration regarding involvement of UWHR in UWPD personnel matters (including hiring, discipline, and terminations) to best maximize the opportunity to benefit from UWHR's expertise and understanding of best practices, while not impeding the Chief's decision-making authority or unduly delaying decision-making.
4. UWPD's leadership should develop a shared understanding with the UW administration regarding UWHR's access to all Department personnel files, including those related to employee applicants' background checks and results for any polygraph test, drug test, or medical or psychological evaluation administered during the UWPD hiring process.
5. UWPD's leadership should investigate further whether any third-party vendor has failed to share relevant background information gathered during the pre-hire process concerning individuals employed by the Department, and if so, take appropriate steps to address the concerns identified.

⁶³ <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/departments-justice-announces-new-active-shooter-training-grant-first-responders>

IX. Conclusion

While the UWPD has made strides over the past 10 years in moving the Department and its mission forward, aspects of UWPD's organizational health are not functioning well. Current leadership practices make it difficult for the Department to break out of dysfunctional modes of operating. The foundation for success going forward will be a transformational leader with a strong relationship focus. While the short-term focus should be on establishing stability and civility in the Department, in the long run the next UWPD Chief should have a strategy to positively impact the Department's overall culture, making changes as required in UWPD's approach to leadership efficacy, allocation of resources, personnel protocols, and organizational structure.